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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

##### Sezer Asks Erdogan to Submit Cabinet List to New President

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan said on Thursday he was delaying the announcement of his new cabinet lineup after outgoing President Sezer refused to review it and asked the PM to hand the list to the next head of state instead. Prime Minister Erdogan said President Sezer's move, which came as a "surprise," had been a positive "gesture." Erdogan said that some revisions might now be made to the list. Main opposition CHP said what the President did was both a "gesture" and "response" to the PM, recalling comments by Erdogan earlier this week that he would not accept any objections to the cabinet list from President Sezer.

##### Editorial Commentary on President Sezer's Action

Okay Gonensin writes in the mainstream daily Vatan: "President Sezer has served as a genuine opposition leader to the AKP government since 2002. He chose to execute his authority to supervise and limit the government. The latest 'gesture' with the cabinet list is in fact a serious blow to the government, maybe even the most serious one up to now. His gesture meant that he gave a complete refusal to the cabinet list. By acting this way, he avoided making any effort toward consensus and reconciliation. Sezer has not taken into account the wishes of people who want reconciliation - a group not limited to those who voted for AKP. Time will tell whether he did the right thing or not."

##### Buyukanit Declines Comment on Presidency

All papers report the chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) General Yasar Buyukanit, at a reception at Presidential Palace on Thursday, said in response to press questions on the presidency that "everything that needs to be said has been said." "They say that every time I speak up, the markets dive in Turkey. The same thing happens if I don't speak at all. What should I do, do a handstand?" said Buyukanit. The TGS Chief said that in previous remarks he has only repeated what was written in the constitution, reiterating that the military wants a president whose words would be echoed in his

conduct and attitude. On whether Abdullah Gul would be allowed to attend the military-hosted August 30 reception with his wife, Buyukanit said, "Our principles are clear. We will not fight with anyone, but neither will we leave aside those principles," implying that the reception venue rules forbidding the wearing of the headscarf would not be waived.

#### Turkish Stock Market Takes a Dive

All papers report that the sharp decline at US stock exchanges has negatively affected the world markets, including that of Turkey. The stock market in Turkey had its fastest decline in the last four years and lost 6.7 percent. The Turkish currency dropped to its lowest level since March 14, falling 5.1 percent, the most of any currency against the dollar. The US Dollar reached 1.415 YTL, its highest level since March.

#### Ocalan's Prison Conditions to be Raised in Parliament

Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet: During a conversation with journalists yesterday, Nurettin Demirtas, the deputy chairman of the Democratic Society Party (DTP), said that the party would bring jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's living conditions in Imrali Prison to the agenda of the Parliament. Demirtas claimed that Ocalan has been living under inhumane conditions in a cell in Imrali. Demirtas added that his party will also bring the Ilisu Dam Project and the issue of forest fires in the southeast to the Parliamentary agenda. He was quoted as saying that "military operations are launched in the southeast almost everyday. The forests have been set on fire with the excuse that they are security precautions. The forest fires in Mardin, Hakkari, Sirnak and Dersim still continue because fire fighting is being prevented in these areas."

#### Editorial Commentary on US Stance on Iranian Republican Guard

Kubilay Celik writes in the nationalist daily Tercuman: "How could

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the US declare a country's army a terrorist organization? This is kind of act is very hard to understand. Nevertheless, the US administration has just accomplished another 'first' in the world by announcing that the Iranian army is a terrorist organization. That means the Iranian army, from now on, will be treated as equal to Hamas, the PKK or al-Qaeda. President Bush is on his way to finishing his second and last term, and his performance during his tenure justifies the label 'terminator.' He made the US unsympathetic to all, with the UK being the only exception. With so many troubles and enemies, creating new tension should be the last thing the US does. Despite this fact, President Bush, instead of giving some positive messages to the world before his term ends, is working toward creating new conflicts, such as calling the Iranian army terrorists. The fact of the matter is that President Bush is handing over a world filled with fears and enemies to his successor."

#### TV Highlights

NTV, 7.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- On August 17, Turkey marks the eighth anniversary of a devastating earthquake that left an estimated 18,000 dead and caused massive damage across much of the northwestern provinces.

- President Sezer has honored businessman Jak Kamhi at the Presidential Palace with the state medal of merit for "his meritorious services at home and abroad."

- The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul has applied to the European Court of Human Rights against Turkey for transferring the deed of an immovable asset in Buyukada to the Greek Orphanage Foundation. The asset was bought by the Patriarchate for 246,650 British Pounds in 1902.

- The number of foreigners choosing to settle in Turkey's Mediterranean coastal city of Antalya has reached 13,225. Antalya has hosted around 8 million tourists this year.

#### International News

- An unidentified Turkish official told Israeli daily Ha'aretz that Ankara did not break ties with Hamas despite objections from Israel and the US. Ankara thinks Washington's policy of seeing Iran, Syria, and Hamas on the same side pushes Syria and Hamas closer to Iran.

- The Greek government has said early general elections will be held September 16. Prime Minister Karamanlis' New Democracy Party leads a slight margin ahead of the opposition socialists.

- The Shiites and Kurds have set up a new alliance in an effort to end the political bottleneck in Iraq. President Talabani and Prime Minister Maliki said they keep their doors open to the Sunni groups who have rejected joining the bloc.

- Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani said the attacks which killed some 400 Yezidis in Ninova province in northern Iraq aimed at seeing the Kurds leave their homes. Barzani added Kurdish security forces should be sent to the region to protect the Yezidis.

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